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C O N F I D E N T I A L TIRANA 000723

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KWMN](#) [KTIP](#) [SMIG](#) [SOCI](#) [AL](#)
SUBJECT: LONG ELECTORAL PROCESS SLOWING DOWN ANTI-TIP
PROGRESS

Classified By: DCM Deborah A. Jones, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: Despite an unprecedented flurry of anti-trafficking activity in 2008, in 2009 the GOA's anti-trafficking efforts appear to have come to a standstill, a victim of the entire GOA's preoccupation since April of this year with the June parliamentary elections and subsequent government reshuffle. In recent meetings with GOA officials, it appears that the GOA has taken only limited concrete steps in its anti-human trafficking efforts since early 2009. GOA officials have told us that the Ministry of Interior (MOI), and nearly all other ministries, for that matter, have largely been paralyzed since the elections. A good example is the information for the anti-trafficking database, which was a key step forward last year. The database, which requires input from the MOI, the Ministry of Labor (MOL), and others, has had very little data entered into it this year, and the office that oversees the process remains without a director.
END SUMMARY.

¶2. (C) Contributing to the problem is the lack of leadership in the Office of the National Anti Trafficking Coordinator (ONAC) at the MOI, the lead office in the GOA for TIP. The Deputy Minister overseeing this office, Iva Zajmi, has taken a two month maternity leave which started in early September. (Note: On October 18, Zajmi did make two cameo appearances at two events marking EU Anti-Trafficking Day. End note.) No mechanisms have been put in place to allow for an interim director, in contrast to Zajmi's previous maternity leave when her deputy was formally assigned responsibility to act as director of ONAC. During Zajmi's first leave, her deputy, Irena Taga, was able to make decisions, commit resources, and call on other Ministries. This time, however, Taga has been given no such authority. Recently, however, Minister Basha spoke publicly about combating the scourge of human trafficking. NGOs have also lamented the lack of movement; however, they have stated that working level cooperation continues.

¶3. (C) Comment: The inaction on TIP is disappointing, but all too predictable given the parliamentary elections in June. The most recent EU Progress Report on Albania said that because of the elections and subsequent GOA reshuffle, little real progress has been made in 2009 on EU integration efforts. Nearly all Ministries have been almost

non-functional since April, first as the GOA mobilized for the election campaign, and then as ministers were reshuffled in the wake of the election. In total, six months of the year were lost due to the elections and formation of the new government. In recent weeks, however, government activity has increased. The GOA retains the political will at the highest levels for anti-trafficking efforts and at the working level, but due to the lack of mid-level leadership many actions and initiatives appear to have stalled. The GOA will likely get its act together soon and spend some late nights entering data into the database, but it has lost considerable momentum from last year. The GOA's commitment appears genuine, but its actions, or lack thereof, remain of concern, , despite the considerable progress made last year. This week both EmbOffs and the Ambassador have spoken with Minister Basha about the lack of progress. Next week Post will meet with the Minister to discuss specific details regarding Albania's TIP action plans.

WITHERS